7/18/71

Mr. Ben Bradlee, Ex. Editor
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Mr. Bradlee,

After reading Dr. John Lattimer's piece in the May Resident and Staff Physician, you wrote to tell me how persuasive it is and how impressed you were. I asked you to lend me a copy so I could analyze it. You didn't, I got a copy, and this morning, in time before required to do something else, got to page 45. I have made marginal notes. It is incredible. I seriously underestimated Dr. Lattimer's incompetence and dishonesty. Familiarity with his previous worthless irrelevancies and dishonesties so blatant they include fictional footnoted authority did not prepare me for this.

If you will take the time for it, this provides what I think is an excellent illustration of how the press can be conned in general and has been from the beginning in this case (aided by an unwillingness to consider the awesome and frightening reality so widely suspected from the first).

As I have told you, my purpose is not press attention but the opposite. I have stipulated only the preservation of confidence. Originally my reason was the preservation of my right to my own work, even if printing seems impossible now. Since then another and compelling reason has developed. I expect a rather nasty development and I want to be in a position to try to undo the harm I consider possible. Should you like, I will explain this to you, again in confidence.

I do not get paid for my time. I have no income and large debts. If I stipulate confidence, meaning no news story, can there be anything I can gain personally from informing you?

You can satisfy yourself in advance about the solidity of my work, in a very few moments. I met Paul Valentine because he covered the May minitrial, in which I was interested. There are wide disagreements between us, but he is a trustworthy, competent reporter and, not knowing what the future could hold, I showed him some of the evidence I have obtained in confidence. With the more important evidence, this includes a chain from my original sources, not the National Archives, to me, in writing.

My own view I do not hide. It is that the failure of the press to serve its traditional role in our society made those many tragedies following the JFK assassination possible. Because I am aware that I am close to completely unpublishable, my writing is not commercially oriented and weaves this in as part of the historical record I can leave. It makes for massive texts and a record of which no United States newspaper can be proud.

If it is too late to undo the past, there is a future. In the near future I expect the ultimate obscenity. Whether or not it comes to pass, it is in the works. Aside from personal friendship with the President, you fill one of the more important roles in the press. I do hope you can come to see that your personal integrity and that of your paper ought impel you to at least inform yourself.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg